



**Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development**

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER ADAPTABILITY AND  
SELECTED ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES WITH EMPLOYEE  
ENGAGEMENT: A STUDY IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY**

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**Bachelor of Science (Honours)  
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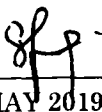
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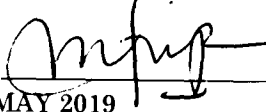
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**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAREER ADAPTABILITY AND SELECTED  
ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES WITH EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A STUDY IN  
HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY**

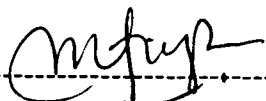
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This project is submitted  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a  
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Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development  
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The project entitled '[The Relationship between Career Adaptability and Selected Organizational Practices with Employee Engagement: A Study in Hospitality Industry]' was prepared by [Oong Seak Fong] and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (*Human Resource Development*)

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the relationship between career adaptability and selected organizational practices (communication, reward, and training) with employee engagement in the hospitality industry. Past researches focused on different elements of human resource practices, organizational practices and other industry in Malaysia. The theory used in this study is Job-Demands Resources (JD-R) model. A survey methodology was used in this study. This research involves the utilization of questionnaire which was administered among 76 employees working in the selected organization. This study was conducted in 2 selected hotel industry located in Klang, Selangor. The relationship between career adaptability and selected organizational practices was analyzed using the Spearman Correlation Analysis. The dominant factor that affects employee engagement were identified using Multiple Regression analysis. The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between career adaptability and employee engagement whereas there is a moderate positive relationship between selected organizational practices with employee engagement. The results also revealed that the dominant factor that affects employee engagement is career adaptability. Hence, from this study, the organization can implement or modified current organizational practices to improve the employee engagement of the employee in the organization. In order to gain future insight regarding the area of this study, the future researcher can use other organizational practices as independent variables.

*Keywords:* employee engagement, career adaptability, organizational practices, communication, reward, training, Job-Demands Resources Model

## ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji tentang hubungan antara penyesuaian kerjaya dan amalan organisasi terpilih (komunikasi, ganjaran, dan latihan) dengan penglibatan pekerja antara pekerja yang bekerja dalam industri hotel. Penyelidikan yang sebelum ini memberi tumpuan kepada pelbagai elemen amalan sumber manusia, amalan organisasi dan industri yang berlainan di Malaysia. Teori yang digunakan dalam kajian ini adalah model Job-Demands-Resources (JD-R). Kaedah kaji selidik telah digunakan sebagai alat untuk mengumpul data. Kajian ini melibatkan penggunaan borang soal selidik dan telah diedarkan kepada 76 pekerja yang bekerja di organisasi terpilih. Kajian ini telah dijalankan di 2 industri hotel terpilih yang terletak di Klang, Selangor. Hubungan antara penyesuaian kerjaya dan amalan organisasi terpilih dianalisis menggunakan Analisis Korelasi Spearman. Faktor dominan yang mempengaruhi penglibatan pekerja dikenal pasti menggunakan Analisis Regresi Berganda. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara penyesuaian kerjaya dan penglibatan pekerja manakala terdapat hubungan positif yang sederhana antara amalan organisasi terpilih dengan penglibatan pekerja. Hasil kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa faktor dominan yang mempengaruhi penglibatan pekerja adalah penyesuaian kerjaya. Oleh itu, dari kajian ini, organisasi boleh melaksanakan atau mengubahsuai amalan organisasi semasa untuk meningkatkan penglibatan kakitangan pekerja dalam organisasi. Untuk mendapatkan maklumat yang lebih lanjut mengenai bidang kajian ini, penyelidik lain boleh menggunakan amalan organisasi lain sebagai pembolehubah.

*Kata kunci:* penglibatan pekerja, penyesuaian kerjaya, amalan organisasi, komunikasi, ganjaran, latihan, model Job-Demands-Resources

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Organizational practices play an essential role in examining the employee engagement level in an organization. Engaged employees enjoy their work and give their best to the organization. The purpose of this research is to study the relationship between selected organizational practices and employee engagement among employees. This chapter focuses on the background of study, problem statement, objectives and hypotheses of this research, conceptual framework, significance of study, limitations of study and definition of terms.

### **1.0 Background of Study**

Recently, according to “2018 Trends in Global Employee Engagement Report” by Aon, a global professional services firm, the percentage of employee engagement in Malaysia is gradually increasing yet still consider not really high as compared to other Asia Pacific country (Ismail, 2018). In 2018, the data increased by four points to 63%, however, the percentage is still lower compared to neighboring countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines who scored 76% and 71% respectively (Ismail, 2018). The study from Aon also found out that work-life balance, career development, diversity and inclusion, rewards and recognition, and employee value proposition are the five important engagement chances in Malaysia (Ismail, 2018). Past researcher identified that leadership styles, communication, work-life balance, pay, and benefits are closely associated with employee engagement in Malaysia healthcare industry (Ganesan, Zainal Azli, & Fageeh, 2017). The study found that leadership style is the most influencing factors among the four variables. In another survey by HR Landscape in 2018, a survey of 447 UK HR Directors, Managers and Executives found that the top 2018 HR obstacles were employee engagement followed by staff retention, absence management and recruitment, and succession and planning (Heath, 2018). According



to Heath (2018), this result is slightly different from 2017 as the top HR obstacles in 2017 is recruitment followed by absence management, employee engagement, and retention.

In 2018, there was increasing research on employee engagement with predictors conducted by various scholars, such as human resource management practices, customer service orientation, positive organizational culture and individual adaptability, leadership, and training and employee performance (Aktar & Pangil, 2018; Johnson, Park, & Bartlett, 2018; Parent & Lovelace, 2018; Saari, Melin, Balabanova, & Efendiev, 2018; Sendawula, Kimuli, Bananuka, & Muganga, 2018). Other scholars have also investigated employee engagement with variables such as rewards and recognition, performance management, intention to leave, organizational climate, leadership commitment and organizational performance, high-involvement work practices, organization culture, and communication, and career adaptability (Ghosh, Rai, Chauhan, Baranwal, & Srivastava, 2016; Gruman & Saks, 2011; Hussain, Yunus, Ishak, & Daud, 2013; Langford, 2009; Nasomboon, 2014; Rana, 2015; Sarangi & Srivastava, 2012; Tladinyane & Van der Merwe, 2016). The previous researches mentioned above show that there was a significant relationship between the independent variables and employee engagement.

A positive organizational practice would increase organization's employee engagement. Previous research discovered engaged employees were loyal to their current organization (Ramsay & Finney, 2006). It is important for human resource practitioner to ensure there are positive organizational practices in the organization as engaged employees lead to better organization performance. Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify the relationship between career adaptability and selected organizational practices with employee engagement in the hospitality industry.

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

Employee engagement is important because engaged employees will enjoy their current job and give their best to the organization. Meanwhile, there is a past research on determinants of employee engagement in Malaysia hotel industry which tested on four main factors (training and development for employees, internal communication among employees, rewards, and leadership), but this study focused on the development of a conceptual model (Zainol, Mohd Hussin, & Othman, 2016). Ganesan et al. (2017) discovered pay and benefits, leadership styles, communication, and work-life balance influenced employee engagement. From the four variables in this study, leadership style was the main cause that determines employee engagement in the Malaysian healthcare industry (Ganesan et al., 2017). Although there were some past researches done in Malaysia context, more study is required to test factors that influence employee engagement.

In addition, there is past research that study on the connection between positive organizational culture and individual adaptability with employee engagement but this study only reviewed the literature regarding this study and no data collection was done (Parent & Lovelace, 2018). Besides, there is also past study regarding communication which studied on internal communication and employee engagement but it was a pilot study and this sampling limitation may not represent the wider population (Karanges, Johnston, Beatson, & Lings, 2015). Communication is also important as the employees in the service industry especially high-stress industry like hospitality industry. Therefore, communication may be a crucial factor in influencing employee engagement.

Another research focused on reward and recognition to engage bank employees (Ghosh et al., 2016) but their study only focused on bank employees. One of the independent variables was reward system as reward plays an important role to engage employees as private sector usually reward their employees according to each individual performance.

Apart from that, there was also past research that studied the training, employee performance and employee engagement in Uganda's health sector (Sendawula et al., 2018). Training is crucial in accelerating knowledge, skills, and ability of the employees.

Previous researches mostly focused on different elements of human resource practices and organizational practices. Moreover, the research on organizational practices and employee engagement that have been conducted in Malaysia focused on other industry such as healthcare industry and manufacturing firms (Choo, Mat, & Al-Omari, 2013; Ganesan et al., 2017; Johari, Adnan, Yean, Yahya, & Isa, 2013) There is no known study on organizational practices that focused on career adaptability, communication, reward, and training have been conducted in the Malaysian hospitality industry. Therefore, this research is crucial to occupy the gaps in literature of employee engagement and to find out the most important elements of organizational practices that will have influence on the employee engagement in the Malaysian hospitality industry.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this research are categorized into general objective and specific objectives.

### **1.2.1 General Objective**

This general objective is to determine the relationship between career adaptability and selected organizational practices with employee engagement in the hospitality industry.

### **1.2.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives are:

- a. To identify the relationship between career adaptability and employee engagement.
- b. To identify the relationship between communication and employee engagement.
- c. To identify the relationship between reward and employee engagement.

- d. To identify the relationship between training and employee engagement.
- e. To identify the dominant organizational practice that influences employee engagement.

### **1.3 Research Hypotheses**

From the research objectives, the hypotheses are formulated as:

Ha 1: There is a significant relationship between career adaptability and employee engagement among employees in the hospitality industry.

Ha 2: There is a significant relationship between communication and employee engagement among employees in the hospitality industry.

Ha 3: There is a significant relationship between reward and employee engagement among employees in the hospitality industry.

Ha 4: There is a significant relationship between training and employee engagement among employees in the hospitality industry.

Ha 5: There is a dominant organizational practice that influences employee engagement among employees in the hospitality industry.

### **1.4 Conceptual Framework**

In this research, the conceptual framework is as shown in Figure 1. The first part is the independent variable, which comprises career adaptability and selected organizational practices. In this study, organizational practices consist of three items including communication, reward, and training. The second part is dependent variable, which is employee engagement. The objective of this study is to determine the relationship between career adaptability and selected factors of organizational practices (communication, reward, and training) with employee engagement. The conceptual framework is adapted from several

past researches by Ganesan et al., 2017; Johari et al., 2013; Parent & Lovelace, 2018; Zainol et al., 2016.

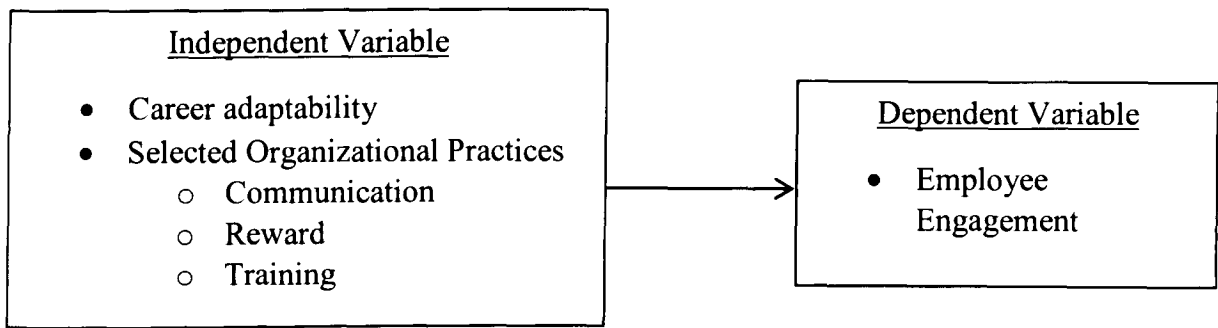


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

1.5 Significance of Study

This study may contribute useful information for many parties as well as for the researcher. The findings of the study may contribute to the body of existing literature. By determining the relationship between selected organizational practices and employee engagement in the hospitality industry, the findings may extend the current literature on factors that may encourage employees to be engaged in their workplace. The organizational practices in this study emphasize communication, reward, and training. Employees may realize that engagement is not only important for the organization but also can benefits themselves as engagement and career development can enhance their quality of life and family’s quality of life. Students can acquire a clearer understanding of organizational practices and employee engagement through this study.

Apart from that, this study may provide new sources of reference for the future researcher that are interested to carry out similar research. Findings from this study can help to facilitate conducting other research by providing information related to organizational practices and employee engagement.

Moreover, the findings of this study are significant to the management and human resource practitioner. This study is important to the management as they are responsible for the operation of the company. Since organizational practices are one of the determinants of employee engagement, this study can help the human resource practitioner to have a better understanding and identify the most important organizational practice that will affect employee engagement. It is necessary for an organization to sustain and increase the level of employee engagement because of challenging economic culture. From the outcomes of this research, recommendations can help to modify or enhance current organizational practices to ensure all the employees are more engaged.

Employee engagement is closely associated with human resource development and organizational development in an organization. Training in human resource development can help to accelerate the knowledge, skills, abilities and also engagement of the employees. Organizational development practitioner plays a crucial role in helping the management to keep people engaged in the organization.

## **1.6 Definitions of Terms**

In this section, the conceptual definition will be explained first followed by operational definition.

### **1.6.1 Employee Engagement**

**Conceptual:** Employee engagement is “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006, p. 702).

**Operational:** In this study, employee engagement is the positive work-related state of mind that is measured by vigor, dedication and absorption that will affect the performance of the employee in workplace.



### 1.6.2 Career Adaptability

**Conceptual:** Career adaptability is the “readiness to cope with the unpredictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changes in work and working conditions” (Savickas, 1997, p. 254).

**Operational:** In this study, the term career adaptability refers to preparedness to manage and prepare for their job responsibilities with different challenges prompted by working conditions.

### 1.6.3 Communication

**Conceptual:** Communication is the information transactions between colleagues and/or groups at different levels and areas of specialization that are intended to design and redesign organizations, to implement designs, and to carry out daily activities (Frank & Brownell, 1989).

**Operational:** In this study, communication is the activities of conveying information from an individual to another individual or group in an organization in order to work together efficiently.

### 1.6.4 Reward

**Conceptual:** Rewards are financial rewards (such as pay and bonuses), where the employer provides for employees or non-financial rewards (such as extra holiday, voucher schemes element) or consists of both financial and non-financial, which are partial or total rewards (Armstrong, 2009).

**Operational:** In this study, reward refers to the strategies of an organization to reward their members equally according to their performance in the organization either in monetary forms (pay or bonuses) or non-monetary forms (medical, insurance, discount on products or services).

### **1.6.5 Training**

**Conceptual:** Training is a systematic approach to learning and development to enhance personal, group, and organizational effectiveness (Goldstein & Ford, 2002).

**Operational:** In this study, training refers to the learning process to accelerate the knowledge, skills, and abilities of members in the organization so that they can become capable and work efficiently.

### **1.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researcher has discussed on the background of study, statement of problem, research objectives, and hypotheses, conceptual framework, significance of study, definition of terms which consist of conceptual and operational definition and the last is limitations of study. The second chapter of this research will discuss literature relevant to the research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter review literature on career adaptability, selected organizational practices and employee engagement. The concepts obtained from this literature were used in generating the conceptual framework and the hypotheses for this research. This chapter is categorized into four sections. The first section is about the concept which includes the concept of employee engagement, types of employee engagement and the importance of employee engagement. The second section is the relationship between career adaptability and each element of organizational practices with employee engagement. The third section emphasizes the theory used in this research which is job demands-resources (JD-R) model whereas the last section is the conclusion of this chapter.

#### **2.1 Concept**

##### **2.1.1 Employee Engagement**

The term employee engagement getting more popular and there are more researches concentrating on employee engagement in an organizational context. There are numerous different definitions of employee engagement provided by different researchers in academic literature (Saks, 2006). The term employee engagement was first innovated by William Kahn during 1990. Kahn (1990) stated that employee engagement is “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances” (p.694). The cognitive aspect in this definition is the employees’ belief toward the company, employer, and working situations. The emotional aspect is about the employees’ feeling on the company, employer and the working situations whereas the physical aspect is about the effort used by employees to complete their tasks.

As stated by Robinson, Perryman, and Hayday (2004), they defined employee engagement as “a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values” (p. 9). Saks (2006) extended the employee engagement concept to two aspects which are job engagement and organizational engagement. Shuck and Wollard (2010) explained engagement as “an individual employee’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes.” (p. 103). According to Aon (2018), a global professional services firm, employee engagement is “the level of employee’s psychological investment in their organization” (p. 2). The Trend in Global Employee Engagement is measured with “Say, Stay, Strive” model. The aspect “Say” is the speak positive things related to the organization to others whereas “Stay” is having the sense of belonging and desire to be part of the organization (Aon, 2018). The third aspect “Strive” is motivated to put more effort and engage in work to help the organization to succeed (Aon, 2018).

The definition by Schaufeli et al. (2006) is used by most of the academic researchers. Schaufeli et al. (2006) explained employee engagement as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (p. 702). Schaufeli (2013) mentioned that vigor is the ability of a person to put effort in their work, continue to be persistent while facing difficulties and have high level of energy while working. Dedication is the feeling of significance, passion, inspiration, pride, and challenge whereas absorption is an individual is very engrossed and fully concentrated in his job until he thinks that his working hours passed quickly, and he has trouble to detach himself from work (Schaufeli, 2013). Therefore, engaged employees will contribute their effort to main responsibilities and job duties as well as extra role behavior. To this day, most of the researchers that study employee engagement used the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) because it is a valid and reliable questionnaire. This questionnaire is created according to the definition of engagement which consists of three components (vigor,